

Burlington Johnnycake Mountain Park Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

October 4, 2021

- **Call to order:**

Meeting was called to order at 6:10 pm. Commissioners present: Tricia Twomey, Joan Mack, Robert Dunn, Elizabeth Delano, Christie Dockman, Karen Geitz, Craig Battisto and Mark Moriarty. Brian Kent from Kent and Frost was also present.

- **Motion to approve the September 21st meeting minutes:**

Liz made the motion, Craig seconded it and all voted in favor.

- **Talk about an item on your Bucket List:**

Committee Members (CM) and Brian Kent shared information about an item on their Bucket List. The goal with this activity is for the CM to get to know each other better.

- **Mission Statement:**

Mark read the Mission Statement.

Mission Statement is to create a feasible and visionary short and long term master plan for the purchased property that provides the multi-generational community of Burlington with opportunities for active and passive recreation. Our recommendations will be based upon considerations and input from our entire community, will support documented community needs, will strive to retain the unique, farm-like character and natural landscape of the property and will be aware of the potential impact to the surrounding neighborhoods.

We endorse the following values:

- Open-mindedness
- Team unity
- Respect for one another
- Commitment to a positive outcome

- **Public Comment:**

Dwight Harris asked when the public will have a chance to see the Master Plan. Mark said that we have a good basic plan and that the Commission will get it out sooner than later. Mark also noted that the Board of Selectmen were very enthusiastic about the plan at the last Board of Selectmen meeting.

- **Park Masterplan:**

Brian shared the updates to the park plan:

The [Eastern end](#) of the park will have a new trail that surrounds the dog park. It can be a trail where the trees have education labels. Brian also suggested planting more understory trees in that area. Because this trail will go around the dog park, it will give dog owners an opportunity to walk with their dog, but not in the center of the park with other people.

The pond on the southern end needs more shade so additional trees will be planted on the south, east and west sides of the pond. The extra shade will provide a better habitat for the fish.

At the main entrance to the park, Brian recommended that the Town leave the end of the shared driveway for the neighbor. It will preserve their right of way.

Trees in the park:

Perimeter trees will create a nice buffer between the road and the park. Scott Tharau from Public Works was concerned with trees along Rock Rd. during the winter. He indicated that there will be a problem with snowdrifts in that spot. The trees will be planted 60' apart and right inside of the fence line. They cannot be planted in the Town's 50' right of way. Scott said they need that area to push back snow drifts. Brian recommended planting new evergreens within the park near the LAX field as a windbreak using more native species. On Mountain Top Pass the trees will be set back from the road. There is space. Houses on the southern perimeter of the park feel like they are in the park. New trees in this area will provide a natural tree screen from the interior of the park. The tree canopy will buffer the view of the houses. These trees will be low maintenance for the town.

Also, a combination of fencing and trees can be along the perimeter. Another option is to keep the existing fence as long as it will last. New fencing will be installed on both sides of the entry. If the southwest corner has animals and if the easement behind the house has animals, fencing will be necessary in those areas. Fencing will also surround the community garden.

Complete Cost Analysis:

Part I:

The overall park construction. It includes: the driveway, the pathway, community garden, LAX field, playgrounds, picnic pavilions. In other words, everything, but the community building.

Part II:

Community Building:

The building will be 40 X 80 and divided in half. The square footage is 3200 feet. One half will include the P/R Office, storage, restrooms and the other half will be a community room to rent out or hold classes in.

Each part listed above is almost the same in price.

Brian described ways to defray costs for the park. For example, the community can build playgrounds with a crew of volunteers. Also, there are naming opportunities for generous donors. With the picnic pavilions, a family or foundation may want to pay the \$60,000 for one.

Brian detailed other areas of the park. The Community Garden can be the nexus of the park near the parking area. The Community Building will become the heart of the park. The southern area of the park near the pond can be a standalone section. Ice skating was

mentioned with the entry to the pond on the flat side. The silage or manure bunker can be used for corn hole sets. This area can be rented on its own for gatherings.

The hayfields will be maintained and it's possible to use the SW hayfield as overflow parking on the grass. The central spine will have some handicap parking. The road will be 24' wide and if necessary cars can parallel park on the side of the road.

On the far [eastern end of the park](#), nothing will be programmed there. There are invasive plants like Japanese knotweed and canary grass to control. These plants will cause lots of trouble if not controlled. In the SW corner of the property, Public Works will need a maintenance building. It will provide a parking area for machinery. If you have animals in this area, you can put in a barn. The maintenance building will be simple and utilitarian, possibly 20' by 30'. Brian asked Scott Tharau what size building he needs. Scott will get an equipment list and fertilizer specific to the park. The building can be a prefab one with lights only and no heat. It may cost around \$20,000.

Brian gave pricing for paved and aggregate on the [driveway](#), road and parking lots. Which is better? Paving or aggregate? The Town can pave the driveway down and make the other parts aggregate. This will cost less money.

Scott Tharau brought up that there is [no throughway in the park](#) and considered it a safety issue. It may be difficult to get emergency vehicles in and out. Scott recommended getting the fire marshal's input on the plan.

Other comments about the road:

Having fewer roads can make it safer. It is entirely normal to have one entrance. If parallel parking along the road is dangerous, the Town will not allow it.

Dwight Harris asked if he can have a copy of the map. Mark said he didn't see why not.

Items on the Cost List:

Brian said it will cost \$87,000 to remove the barns. Scott T is getting a quote. The Town will not get the recycle money as it will be part of the contractor's pay.

Earthwork:

How deep is the topsoil on the field? You can't build on topsoil. It has to be removed and used in other areas. Brian assumes that there is 12" of topsoil to move.

The [LAX field](#) is 2.3 acres. There are lots of cubic yards of soil on a site. After grading the LAX field, there will be a surplus of material and the Town can use it on the practice field. There is a cut and fill balance. You can't crown the LAX field because it would send water upslope. There has to be a uniform slope from LAX to the multiuse field. Underdrainage may be necessary. Can we fit a second LAX field where the multiuse field is? The Town should build the plateau at the same time to do cut and fill. The second field can be finished later. It's important to do the

excavation and earthwork now. This will be a pretty significant cut and fill. This excavation infringes upon the little pond and hayfield. The second LAX field has to be at 90 degrees to the first field.

Site Improvements:

[20' by 40' Picnic Pavilion](#). There is a company that brings in a kit and fasteners to make a post and beam pavilion. A concrete slab is put down and the cost for the pavilion is \$60,000. Liz will contact Hinman Lumber to see if it is willing to participate/contribute. The pavilion can be a focal point and a nice place to have the Hinman name.

[The playground](#) in the northern section will cost \$140,000 and there are kits available. There will be two different sections for different ages of children. The smaller, natural playground in the SW corner will be suitable for all kids.

The plan calls for [24 benches](#) and the community can help to purchase these too.

A [run-in shelter for the animals and a storage shed for LAX](#) will be necessary. The LAX field will have field ball nets that are 20' tall with concrete bases to hold them in.

Landscaping:

Brian said that it's best to plant 5'-6' trees. The younger trees will grow and become healthier.

The site drains well and we should try to avoid having to install drainage.

At [the entryway](#), stone entry piers can be used with a wooden farm gateway. Also, there will be a cattle guard/rumble strip that people will drive over.

On the [trails](#), it's optimal to have a stone dust surface if they will be used year round. No vegetation will grow through it. The trails will be 6' wide. An ADA trail can be made out of stone dust or paved. Stone dust is used quite a bit in park-like settings. Scott Tharau suggested making the trails wider to prevent vegetation from growing in over the trails like PW does in the Rails to Trails area along the river. Brian suggested a stone stair tread to get to the fishing dock or a wooden structure of some kind.

There is a lot of [turf](#) in the center. This has to be mowed routinely throughout the year.

[Wildflower meadows](#) are more complicated than hayfields. First you have to eradicate weeds throughout a growing season. When you put in the wildflower seeds, they grow in quickly and will squeeze out the weeds. Brian suggested that we do one area and learn from it and then try another area.

Signage:

The price includes wayfinding signs and a quiosque in the central hub near the parking area.

Site Utilities:

The park will need a power pedestal for concerts. The sanitary sewer costs are rolled into the cost of the community building. The septic field can be in the event field. Remove poles and wires for electricity and put them underground.

Cost: \$2,052,416.25

Additional items: \$656,773

As the design becomes more refined and definite, the contingencies become smaller and smaller.

Alternate Cost Items:

Replace all fencing.

Community Building:

It will cost \$700 per square foot. The price will include more electricity, a well, septic and telecommunications.

The BOS likes the plan, but it can't be done for \$750,000. There are also a lot of competing projects in town for money. It's best to give the BOS the overall plan and CM should spell out the priorities for phases. The BOS would like to do everything at once, but not possible because of the cost. It was suggested to do everything, but the community building.

The community building would have to go to referendum for approval by the town. CM should make phase recommendations based upon the priorities of the community. At this point we don't have a clear direction from the BOS. CM should present the whole plan and then CM can give the BOS direction about what to do initially. What will we do with the \$750,000?

Cost escalation:

This is the add-on amount for prices if the plan is implemented 2-3 years in the future. The longer you wait to fix things, the more problems that will come up. For example, the buildings are falling down and the trees are dying. Are there additional sources for funding?

Scott Tharau said that we should show the BOS the whole plan. PW will have to add staff and equipment to take care of the park. It will cost \$100,000 annually for one employee to manage it. A PW employee now spends 30 man hours a week mowing and that does not include fertilizing.

A new fence will have three rails instead of five. The Town has to weed whack around the fence. The stone dust trails will have to be mown back. There are two miles of trail to maintain in the Park. Also, PW will have to pick up garbage on Monday/Friday.

Once you build the park, you need to take care of it. Use metal buildings so that they are low maintenance. Put flower pots in the center of parking lot. They will be easy to remove in the winter in order to snow plow.

Next meeting:

CM will itemize the dollar amounts for the parking, road and lax field. The CM will discuss phasing and costs.

Is there state bonding available? What about a Rails to Trails Grant?

Brian suggested building the essential ingredients. We can pour the slabs for the pavilions and playgrounds and then look for donors. Build two lacrosse fields at the same time with cut and fill. There will be a major change to character of the northern part of the park with the two fields.

Make the parking lot gravel and not paved.

Brian will make the renderings of the two lax fields. Once we get a concept that CM can agree upon, we can put the plan out on the Town website.

Public Meeting Date:

Who decides that date? The CM or BOS? We can set a date and see what works for the BOS. What do we want to accomplish with this public meeting? We want to give the public an opportunity to start to comment. We need to make sure there is buy in from the community.

Postcard to inform public about the meeting date:

This postcard will include a picture of the plan and a date for the meeting.

Commission Meeting on October 18th:

CM will have a full zoom meeting in order to see the 3D renderings better and decide the game plan for the public meeting.

Public Meeting on October 25th:

Tricia will set up a full town wide meeting. CM will explain the steps they took to create the plan. Then they can give Brian prompt feedback. CM will decide which 3D renderings to use at the Town Meeting on the 18th.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:45:

Christie made the motion, Robert seconded it and all voted in favor.

Minutes respectfully submitted by,
Karen Geitz
October 16, 2021